



ALFALFA

- Date:** January 22, 2008
- Proper name(s):** *Medicago sativa* L. (Fabaceae) (USDA 2008)
- Common name(s):** Alfalfa, lucerne (BHP 1996; Meyer 1993)
- Source material(s):** Aerial parts (Boon and Smith 2004; BHP 1996)
- Route(s) of administration:** Oral
- Dosage form(s):** Those suited to the allowable route(s) of administration. This monograph is not intended to include food-like dosage forms such as bars, chewing gums or beverages.
- Use(s) or Purpose(s):** Statement(s) to the effect of:

Traditionally used in Herbal Medicine as a nutritive tonic (Meyer 1993; BHP 1983).
- Dose(s):** Preparations equivalent to 9-30 g dried aerial parts, per day (Mills 1985; BHP 1983)

See Appendix 1 for examples of appropriate dosage preparations and frequencies of use, according to cited references. The purpose of Appendix 1 is to provide guidance to industry.
- Duration of use:** No statement required.

Risk information:

Caution(s) and warning(s):

- ▶ Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you are taking blood thinners (Boon and Smith 2004; Brinker 2001).
- ▶ Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you are undergoing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or taking birth control medication (Barnes et al. 2007; Boon and Smith 2004; Brinker 2001).

Contraindication(s):

- ▶ Do not use if you have a history of systemic lupus erythematosus (Barnes et al. 2007; Boon and Smith 2004; Brinker 2001).
- ▶ Do not use if you are pregnant or breastfeeding (Brinker 2001).

Known adverse reaction(s): No statement required.

Non-medicinal ingredients: Must be chosen from the current NHPD *List of Acceptable Non-medicinal Ingredients* and must meet the limitations outlined in the list.

Specifications: Must comply with the minimum specifications outlined in the current NHPD *Compendium of Monographs*.

References cited:

Barnes J, Anderson LA, Philipson JD. Herbal Medicines, 3rd edition. London (UK): Pharmaceutical Press; 2007.

BHP 1996: British Herbal Pharmacopoeia. Bournemouth (UK): British Herbal Medical Association; 1996.

BHP 1983: British Herbal Pharmacopoeia. Cowling (UK): British Herbal Medical Association; 1983.

Boon H, Smith MJ. The Complete Natural Medicine Guide to the 50 Most Common Medicinal Herbs, 2nd edition. Toronto (ON): Robert Rose Inc; 2004.

Brinker F. Herb Contraindications and Drug Interactions, 3rd edition. Sandy (OR): Eclectic Medical Publications; 2001.

Meyer JE. The Herbalist. Glenwood (IL): Meyerbooks; 1993.

Mills S. The Dictionary of Modern Herbalsim. Wellingborough (UK): Thorsons Publishers Ltd; 1985.

USDA 2008: ARS, National Genetic Resources Program. Germplasm Resources Information Network (GRIN). *Medicago sativa* L. National Germplasm Resources Laboratory, Beltsville (MD). [Accessed 2008-01-21]. Available at http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/tax_search.pl

References reviewed:

Bartram T. Bartram's Encyclopedia of Herbal Medicine: The Definitive Guide to the Herbal Treatments of Diseases. New York (NY): Marlowe & Company; 1995.

Ellingwood F. American Materia Medica, Therapeutics and Pharmacognosy. Sandy (OR): Eclectic Medical Publications; 1983 [Reprint of 1919 original].

McGuffin M, Hobbs C, Upton R, Goldberg A, editors. American Herbal Products Association's Botanical Safety Handbook. Boca Raton (FL): CRC Press; 1997.

Mills E, Dugoua J, Perri D, Koren G. Herbal Medicines in Pregnancy and Lactation: An Evidence-Based Approach. London (UK): Taylor and Francis Medical; 2006.

Tilgner S. Herbal Medicine from the Heart of the Earth. Creswell (OR): Wise Acre Press; 1999.

Williamson EM, Evans FJ, Wren RC. Potter's New Cyclopaedia of Botanical Drugs and Preparations. Saffron Walden (UK): C.W. Daniel Company Limited; 1988.

Appendix 1: Examples of appropriate dosage preparations and frequencies of use

Dried aerial parts:

- ▶ 5-10 g, 3 times per day (BHP 1983)
- ▶ 3-10 g, 3 times per day (Mills 1985)

Infusion: 5-10 g dried aerial parts, 3 times per day (BHP 1983)

Fluidextract: 5-10 g dried equivalent, 3 times per day (BHP 1983)
(1:1, 25% alcohol, 5-10 ml)